public sector units, tax incentives for setting up of private industries in backward regions, etc. There is no special package to States for making the growth rates of the States nearly identical. However, to address the concerns of regional imbalance a number of programmes have been undertaken. These include, Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF), Hill Area Development Programme/Western Ghats Development Programme, Border Area Development Programme, etc. Under the Backward Regions Grant Fund Additional Central Assistance is being provided under the Special Plans for Bihar and Orissa.

Cutting down of CSS

2260. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in order to achieve effective results and further strengthen its anti-poverty programmes Government has decided to cut down the number of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) run by various Ministries to 99 from current 214;

(b) whether it is a fact that there were many schemes whose objectives were overlapping with each other and there was a huge administrative cost of running each scheme; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) to (c) Plan Schemes are discontinued on the basis of Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB) exercise and rationalization of Schemes during the course of a Plan. The primary purpose of ZBB exercise is to ensure convergence, efficiency and efficacy of Schemes according to Plan objectives and priorities and also the use of available resources in the most judicious and economically efficient manner. The ZBB exercise carried out for the 11th Plan for rationalizing 155 Schemes in operation in 2006-07 resulted in retention of 82 CSS for implementation during 2007-08 after weeding, merger and reclassification.

Priority to rural areas in eleventh plan

†2261. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that only 29 per cent people live in urban areas in India, whereas 50 per cent people are residents of urban areas in the world;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that making of plan outlines require giving priority to rural area which form the basis of development scheme in India; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereto and names of schemes giving priority to rural region in Eleventh Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) and (b) As per the Report of Technical Group of Population Projections entitled, 'Population Projections for India and States 2001-2026' brought out by the Office of Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India, the urban population of the country on 1st March, 2008 is projected to be 29.3% of the total population. As per the

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.